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Factors important to the success of televised FLES programs are identified and discussed. These include--cooperation of secondary school teachers, training methods for the classroom teacher, team teaching, a procedure for the classroom teacher, teaching techniques, choosing a televised FLES program, and FLES in the elementary school curriculum. (AF)

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TELEVISION CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN THE FLES PROGRAM . . . IF

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Can television be employed effectively in the FLES program?** If it can—how? If it cannot—why not? It is my purpose today to try and identify some critical needs which every school system should seriously consider if it plans to use television as the basis for its FLES program.

The coordinated efforts of teachers, principals, and the supervisory staff are essential in the initial planning stages of the FLES program. Such planning takes a great deal of time, but the cooperative spirit and leadership engendered through such efforts will more than justify any delay caused by this preplanning. To coordinate the program and give it leadership, direction and careful articulation, a foreign language specialist should be appointed from the very start.

Besides elementary teachers, foreign language teachers representing the junior and senior high schools should also be involved in the planning stages. This will not only help to promote their support of the FLES program but will also strengthen articulation between the grades and the secondary school. The importance of this support at the secondary level cannot be minimized. It is interesting to note William Locke's observation regarding this strange

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phenomenon of dissension within the ranks:

> It is the arrival of these pupils (2 to 2½ million elementary pupils who have had 2 or 3 years of French) which has crystallized the opposition of the secondary school teachers to elementary school language programs. Overtly and covertly they have carried on the battle against them and have succeeded in many cities in persuading administrators who had frequently adopted them as a result of pressure from parents to drop them.[1]

The objectives for the FLES program should not be so highly impractical that they are impossible to attain. Achievement goals that are reasonable, practical, and clearly understood by both the elementary classroom teachers and the receiving secondary school foreign language teachers will go a long way toward making FLES a part of the overall foreign language program.

It is no revelation that the key to the success of any workable program is the classroom teacher. No matter how well-planned the program, no matter how well-presented the telecast lessons, unless the classroom teacher has a favorable attitude and is completely sure of his role in the team-teaching situation, there will be little chance of the program even getting off the ground. Although television offers one of the most potential and effective ways for team-teaching to be accomplished, a television set can become quite an impersonal vehicle to the classroom teacher. This must be compensated for by personal contacts between the classroom teacher, the studio teacher, and the visiting language specialists.

Much has been written on the need to train the classroom teacher by means of telecasts and in-service courses. Although many large school systems depend partly on televised teacher-training programs, the results obtained are probably not as satisfactory as all of us would like to imagine. Often the viewing of the telecasts is on a purely voluntary basis and is not particularly satisfactory. The value of teacher-telecasts can be enhanced if they are considered to be only a part of an in-service course. In the larger cities, this might necessitate many different classes organized in different sections of the city.

That teacher-training telecasts and in-service courses are of great help there is little doubt. But little has been said of a training procedure which I feel is of even greater importance. This involves training the teacher within the confines of his own classroom by having him observe the techniques of a visiting language specialist. This specialist might be the studio teacher, especially if her telecasts are pre-taped. Besides the studio teacher, whose time is limited, additional language specialists need to be assigned to designated schools for frequent and regular visitations. These visits not only provide the pupils with an opportunity to receive more expert instruction on pronunciation, intonation and rhythm, but they also give the classroom teacher a chance to learn first-hand the important techniques of language teaching which he can use as a model in follow-up activities. Psychologically, too, the visits are necessary since they help remove the feeling of insecurity which many classroom teachers experience. We have noted in our own Milwaukee Spanish program, which is telecast to over 14,000 pupils of the fifth and sixth grades, that these visits have been of immeasurable value in building up the classroom teacher's confidence, enthusiasm and willingness to be a vital part of the FLES program. The classroom teacher needs someone to turn to. The visiting language specialist is one solution.

If every elementary school with a foreign language program set its sights on acquiring on its faculty at least one teacher with a special minor in the foreign language being televised, we will have made a major breakthrough in the FLES television blockade. If this is accomplished, the team-teaching concept could be made truly effective. Imagine what could be done with a team consisting of the studio teacher, the visiting language specialist, the classroom teacher, and the teacher with a special minor in the foreign language who remains in the elementary school as a resource teacher!

It can be made a reality in the future if colleges and universities take the initiative in meeting the FLES teacher shortage In my own state of Wisconsin, the forward-looking Wisconsin State University at Whitewater has started a new program for students who want to be elementary teachers but who also would like to obtain a special minor in French, German, or Spanish. The special minor consists of twenty-two credits or the equivalent in the foreign language course. Besides this, Whitewater has just approved new graduate courses to retrain elementary teachers who might be interested in teaching a foreign language. Support such as this from the university level is what is desperately needed in the FLES program.

The utmost help must be provided to the classroom teacher so that he will know how he can operate most effectively as part of a team-teaching situation. In order for pupils to receive maximum benefit from the telecasts, we recommend in our teacher's guide that the classroom teacher use the following procedures:

(1) Establish the proper attitude and climate for learning a foreign language.

(2) Prepare the pupils for each telecast by reading the "Explanation of Telecast" to them. This will help the pupils get a general idea of what the day's lesson will be.

(3) Read the English translation of the day's lesson to the pupils in order to familiarize them with the meaning of the Spanish sentences they will hear on the telecast.

(4) Do not pronounce the Spanish expressions for the class prior to the telecast.

(5) Insist on complete attention and active participation by the pupils during the telecast.

(6) Participate with your pupils during the telecast by standing near the television set and imitating and repeating the expressions being taught.

(7) Discourage pupils from writing in phonics what is heard on the telecast.

(8) Confine the use of Spanish in the classroom to those basic language patterns being taught. This will help eliminate common errors by pupils in grammatical structure.

(9) Use the various Spanish expressions in appropriate situations during the school day.

(10) Follow the directions in the guide for using the record effectively. Also encourage the pupils to borrow the recordings for home practice.

Among other things, the teacher's guide needs to contain suggested follow-up activities that are workable, stimulating, and specific enough so that the inexperienced classroom teacher can follow them with the least amount of difficulty. Suggested activities which are too general leave the teacher uncertain and confused as to how to procede.

Research studies regarding the follow-up by "Parlons Français" have reinforced what most everyone was pretty sure of, namely, that "Enthusiastic and conscientious handling of follow-up by classroom teachers, regardless of linguistic skill, results in consistently higher scores."[2] Besides the follow-up, it seems to me that the pretelecast lesson activity in which the classroom teacher carefully prepares his pupils to receive the lesson also demands more attention. If the classroom teacher sets the proper climate and explains in English what is going to be taught by the studio teacher, the pupils will be better prepared to learn the foreign language expressions. This introduction to the day's lesson can be done even more effectively if visual cue cards, which illustrate each language expression, are made available to the classroom teacher. The "Explanation of the Telecast" part of the teacher's guide should be presented in a conversational style so that the classroom teacher is not only told what should be done, but also is provided with a sample lesson introduction he can use.

I have mentioned the need to provide the classroom teacher with the proper instructional materials. However, it must be emphasized that simply making these materials available is not enough. More time needs to be spent in demonstrating to the classroom teacher how to use these materials. Providing the classroom teacher with a teacher's guide, visual cue cards, and recordings is a fine start. But the inexperienced teacher needs to be shown techniques that work so that he will acquire the confidence and knowledge to use them to the best advantage.

In preparing the formats for the televised lessons, the studio teacher is constantly

faced with the task of trying to find ways and means so that the pupils are actively involved as much as possible. Passive listening by pupils will produce little or no appreciable results. Pupils need to participate directly by responding actively to cues on the telecast lesson. Whenever possible, if actions can be simultaneously performed by the pupils as they make a response, so much the better. A gazing pupil who doesn't actively participate may enjoy what he sees—but he seldom will learn as much as he should.

Though locally produced television programs have certain advantages, school systems might do well to investigate commercially developed programs rather than develop their own. More and more excellent FLES television programs, produced by commercial companies, are appearing on the market. There are many advantages. The production of printed course materials, teacher guides, pupil take-home records, visual cue cards, teacher telecasts, editing materials, and a 1001 other television details can be deposited into the lap of the commercial company—and more time can be devoted to the important task of helping the classroom teacher.

One of the weaknesses regarding certain FLES programs is that frequently the foreign language is not considered a part of the regular elementary school curriculum. To a great extent we in the foreign language field are to blame for this situation. Often we convey to others that this is such a specialized field that only we are able to guide its destiny with an unerring hand. In so doing, we tend to isolate FLES from those whose support is vitally needed—the elementary school supervisory staff.

One very effective way we can develop the idea that FLES is an integral part of the entire curriculum is to encourage members of the elementary supervisory staff to accompany the language specialist teacher when class visits are made. This is especially necessary during the first year or two of a new FLES program. This helps to convey the idea that FLES is a part of the basic curriculum and not a special program unto itself. Then, too, elementary supervisory personnel will become more aware of the various teaching techniques demonstrated by the specialist teacher—and will be better able to give support and assistance to other teachers.

Another way to help build the image of FLES as a part of the regular elementary curriculum is to require a foreign language grade on the report card. More frequently than not the report card has been little used in the FLES program. It seems to me that this overlooks a valuable incentive. Use of report cards would tend to increase a pupil's motivation and would give him a yardstick to measure his progress. It would also impress upon teachers, pupils and parents that the FLES program is important enough to warrant the giving of grades just as is done in their other subjects; that, in brief, it *is* a part of the elementary curriculum. Recording the pupil's language capabilities provides helpful information to the teacher and parents for more meaningful counseling and proper articulation when the pupil enters the junior high school.

Every FLES program should have built into it provisions for constant and continual informal evaluation, followed periodically with a formal evaluation by a carefully selected committee. Representation on this committee should include elementary and secondary school teachers, principals, supervisory staff, foreign language coordinator, studio teacher, and the State Supervisor of Foreign Languages. The committee should not be restricted to only those who are in favor of FLES via television. Much can be gained from having some committee members whose views reflect a "you've-got-to-show-me" attitude.

Those guiding the destiny of the FLES program must necessarily be willing to admit errors, weaknesses, and omissions. Constant reevaluation and reexamination must be done in the light of new changes and thinking. After all, we must realize that the FLES television picture tube of 1966 is not the same as it was in 1955.

There have been cries of alarm that various FLES television programs have not lived up to expectations. Actually, in

many cases it isn't that the expectations are not being achieved. The crux of the problem could well be that the expectations of the local school system differ from those recommended by the MLA FL Program Advisory and Liaison Committee in their Second Statement of Policy on FLES in 1961. Instead of emphasizing the primary objective of teaching the language skills, beginning with listening and speaking, what frequently happens is that more attention is placed on those values which the MLA Committee identified as being of secondary importance: improved understanding of language in general, intercultural understanding and broadened horizons.

It is true that some encouraging signs are now present that were non-existent before FLES. Elementary school teachers are more aware now than ever before that foreign languages are a part of the curriculum, and they are able to identify those pupils with a flair for foreign language study. Parents and their children now have become more knowledgeable of what a foreign language is and how it works. Pupils entering the junior high school find that language pattern drills, slot substitution, and different sounds are not mysteriously new, but are familiar experiences. In brief, the students know something about what makes a foreign language tick just as they do social studies, arithmetic, physical education, art, or music.

But, in the main, these are only secondary values. If the primary objectives—the communication skills—are to be attained, those who are responsible for the overall elementary school curriculum ought to consider carefully the recommendations of the MLA Advisory and Liaison Committee for fifteen- or twenty-minute sessions at least three times a week and the employment of additional foreign language specialist teachers.

The "if" factors will continue to loom as obstacles to the success of television in the FLES program. But what is encouraging is that we are learning more and more that the "if" factors are not insurmountable when school systems are willing to identify the areas that need strengthening and then take the proper corrective action.

NOTES

[1] William N. Locke, "Future of Language Laboratories," *Modern Language Journal* (May, 1965), p. 296.

[2] Earle S. Randall, "What Have We Learned About FLES?," *Audiovisual Instruction* (November, 1962), p. 627.